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AUTHOR	Newman, Carol; Thomas, Kay
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ABSTRACT

This paper examines issues related to alternative teacher certification, discussing teacher certification in Texas and noting that most researchers agree that both traditional and alternative routes to teacher preparation need improvement. For over a decade, alternative certification has become increasingly available in Texas. This paper highlights: the demand for alternative teacher certification; the early stages of alternative certification programs; who should train prospective teachers; the debate surrounding alternative teacher certification and academic standards; identifying an alternative certification process; comparisons between traditional and alternative programs in Texas, California, New Jersey, and other areas; who is attracted to alternative certification programs; alternative certification for bilingual and special education teachers; and evaluations of alternative teacher certification programs. Alternative certification programs are attracting highly qualified, well-educated, life-experienced adults to the teaching profession. However, critics argue that teacher recruitment, preparation, and retention is much more complex than originally thought by policymakers and alternative certification has not proven to be the panacea nor the disaster some predicted. Most researchers agree that one major difficulty in drawing a conclusive policy statement about alternative certification programs is the great variation in state and local programs. (Contains 67 references.) (SM)

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Alternative Teacher Certification

By Carol Newman
and Kay Thomas, Ph.D.

For more than a decade, alternative certification has become increasingly available as a route to teacher certification. In Texas, for example, nearly a third of the 87 teacher training institutions offer alternative certification, either as an option within the teacher preparation program or as the entire program. Education service agencies (ESAs) have become increasingly involved in teacher certification. Of the 28 Texas alternative certification programs (ACPs), 13—representing nearly half—are located in ESAs ("State Board for Educator Certification," 1999).

The demand for alternative teacher certification

Teacher shortages, the academic quality of individuals entering the teaching profession, and growing criticism of the current traditional teacher education practices combined to spawn the early 1980's movement toward alternative teacher certification (Dill, 1996; Feistritzer, 1998a; Stoddart and Floden, 1995). In 1985, the National Center for Education Statistics projected that by 1992, the supply of new teacher graduates would be only two-thirds of demand. Teacher shortages generally tend to occur for certain populations of students, such as the urban, rural, poor, special education, and bilingual populations (Dill, 1996). No matter how many teachers were being prepared nationally, there has always been a shortage of professionally educated teachers in urban areas (Haberman, 1986). The typical teacher education graduate prefers to teach in a suburban rather than urban school, leaving the urban schools to depend on uncertified teachers or teachers teaching outside their subject area (Haberman, 1988; Feistritzer, 1993).

Subject areas such as math and science have suffered from teacher shortages for the past two decades (Darling-Hammond, Hudson and Kirby, 1989). Although there were many able scientists and mathematicians interested in teaching, they were "unable to smoothly enter the field" (Dill, 1994). Similarly, the field of special education has also been faced with teacher shortages because of the influx of special needs students in schools. This shortage has prompted educators to explore alternative means of preparing certified and qualified special education teachers (Rosenberg and Rock, 1994).

Another issue is the decline in the number of minorities entering teaching fields (Stoddart and Floden, 1995). It is projected that by 2020 about 40 percent of the K-12 school population will be minority students, with little hope for the percentage of minority teachers to parallel this figure (Pallas, Natriello, and McDill, 1989; Zeichner, 1993). The importance of teachers as role models—especially teachers from students' own cultural group—has long been recognized, thus this shortage is viewed as a major detriment to the education of minority students (Middleton, Mason, Stilwell and Parker, 1988).

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Concern about the quality of the teaching force has also led to support for alternative teacher certification (Feistritzer, 1998a). Studies conducted for a period of 20 years, from the 1960s through the 1980s, showed that "teacher education students were among the least academically able of all college students" (Stoddart and Floden, 1995, p. 5). This group of undergraduate students ranked at the bottom of the American College Testing Program (ACT) and Graduate Record Exam (GRE) scores. During the 1970s there was a declining interest among "high-ability individuals" (Dill, 1996, p. 933) to enter the field of teaching, and education was having a difficult time attracting and retaining academically able college students (Schlecty and Vance, 1983).

Currently, growing criticism of current traditional teacher education practices has prompted the move to alternative teacher certification (Dill, 1996). According to Stoddart and Floden (1995), policy makers, relying on national reports such as *A Nation at Risk* (1983), *High School* (1983), and *High School and Beyond* (1990), tend to blame teacher education programs for failing to recruit academically superior candidates. Reports from the Carnegie Task Force on Teaching as a Profession and the Holmes Group have also stated that colleges of education need to improve, as does the quality of their students ("Teacher Quality: New Teachers," 1997). These reports "influenced the climate of opinion regarding the autonomy of college-based teacher education and the relative importance ascribed to subject matter and pedagogy in teacher preparation and certification; they set the stage for the development of alternate certification programs" (Stoddart and Floden, 1995, p. 5).

Early stages of alternative teacher certification programs

The state of Virginia initiated the first ACP in 1982, followed by New Jersey, Texas, and California (Dill, 1996; Feistritzer, 1998a). The implementation of ACPs caused widespread controversy and ignited a new field of research regarding alternative teacher certification. Schlechty and Vance (1983) were among the first to introduce major alternative certification research themes that included concerns about the quality of preparation offered by traditional and alternative programs, recruitment of a demographically representative teaching force, the quality of the candidates recruited, and issues of retention.

Schlecty and Vance's 1983 study covered the time period from 1950 through 1983. During the first 10 years of this period, there were no shortages of teachers, there was a significant growth in colleges of education along with extended certification requirements, and teacher turnover was high. The 1970s saw declining interest in teaching careers among brighter, more capable individuals. Schlecty and Vance attributed this to "poor conditions in the workplace, lack of career advancement opportunities, increasing numbers of viable options for those most likely to pursue teaching, and lack of a strong university commitment to the college of education" (p. 477). Based on their conclusions, Schlecty and Vance recommended alternative teacher certification to remedy these problems: "Responsibility for the professional training of teaching should be divorced from institutions of higher education, and teacher education should once again be placed where it in fact occurs—in the public schools" (p. 484).

Schlecty and Vance (1983) believed site-based training would remove teacher education from the source of its stigma, the university. They suggested that a baccalaureate degree be a prerequisite for admission to a site-based program. The authors predicted that such a system would more than double the number of teacher candidates available in 1950, would save money, and would improve retention. Although these conclusions were considered extreme at the time, they contributed to the "legislative initiatives that eventually led to establishment of a wide variety of alternative teacher certification programs nationwide" (Dill, 1996, p. 933).

Early researchers studied the roles of teacher induction, program standards, and evaluation relative to alternative teacher certification (Dill, 1996). Huling-Austin (1986) investigated induction practices and reported that "high-quality preparation for alternatively certified interns as well as acceptable levels of retention in the profession made induction a vital force in the future of all interns" (p. 55). Huling-Austin observed that teachers who received limited training would need to experience greater growth after certification. She offered several suggestions for program directors to consider to ensure student interns' success: (1) the nature of the teaching assignment, (2) the helpfulness of the support teacher, (3) a flexible program designed to meet the varying needs of interns, and (4) the potential of the program to meet unforeseen concerns.

Who should train teachers?

As more alternative teacher certification programs were adopted, the debate and research turned toward who should train teachers. Hazlett (1984) was especially concerned about who would teach pedagogy to prospective students, as he saw the presence of ACPs as "an assault on education as a field of university study" (p. 46). Hazlett further stated, "It is a painful irony that all the protestations about raising quality, attracting talent into classrooms, and increasing professional standards should be accompanied by a calculated reduction in the amount of knowledge about education to be required of teachers" (p. 46). Hazlett contended that learning to teach through apprenticeship made teaching a craft rather than a profession.

Others associated with college-based programs tended to agree with Hazlett. The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) (1986) issued a position statement arguing that "improving the quality of instruction requires that professional education and certification standards for teachers be strengthened, not diluted" (p. 24). AACTE recognized the teacher shortage and the need to diversify the teacher pool, but cautioned that certifying inadequately prepared teachers could negatively affect the quality of instruction in schools for decades. Similarly, Roth (1986) believed that the knowledge base of teachers could best be learned in institutions of higher education and in traditional coursework, contending that being "certified" to teach and being "qualified" to teach a specific subject matter were two different things. In his study, Roth observed that "bilingual, special education, computer science, vocational education, science, and mathematics students were the most likely to have uncredentialed or misassigned teachers" (p. 726). He believed there was merit to ACP if programs were started to alleviate the problem of children being taught by uncertified teachers; however, he viewed using them simply to bypass traditional coursework as "a serious threat to the profession" (p. 726).

Researchers continued to study the role of teacher preparation institutions. Evertson, Hawley, and Zlotnik (1985) analyzed reform strategies and discussed the relationship of teacher preparation to the need for higher standards and to the need for requirements for more extended preservice coursework. The authors compared "provisional teachers"—those with little preparation or incomplete certificates—with regularly certified teachers and concluded that "teachers who participate in preservice teacher preparation programs are more likely to be more effective than teachers who have little or no formal training" (p. 4). The authors further concluded that competence was lacking outside the completion of certain steps: (1) completion of a liberal arts undergraduate education, (2) competence in the subject being taught as measured by the equivalence of a major, (3) completion of eight to ten courses plus a related practicum to be taken before or after graduation, (4) a yearlong internship in a "teaching school" analogous to a physician's internship, (5) a one or two year induction period with specific characteristics, and (6) ongoing individualized professional development (p. 8).

As the debate continued about ACPs weakening the professionalism of teaching, Wisniewski (1986) defended ACPs, stating "some programs can be very positive" (p. 37). The programs Wisniewski found to be positive were those that developed their alternative programs in collaboration with school systems and the teaching profession in ways that would change and challenge the content and process of teacher preparation. He believed such programs added strength and could make the teaching profession better, asserting that because traditional teacher education programs had maintained a status quo for too long, new, innovative programs were good for the profession.

Eubanks and Parish (1990) advocated ACPs as equity builders and portrayed ACPs entirely provided by school districts as a way to break the trend in education that had existed for some 300 years and had produced hideous outcomes for the poor and minorities. Eubanks and Parish believed there was a cultural breach between universities and public schools that "supported the status quo and ensured unfair treatment for minorities and poor students" (p. 197).

Dill (1996) responded to criticism of ACPs, stating that "the structure of higher education itself, requiring several years of full-time study and an extensive unpaid student teaching experience, is an impediment to minorities and the poor who wish to enter the teaching profession" (p. 941). In defense of her statement, Dill reported that minorities who enter the teaching profession through alternative programs usually outscore their counterparts from traditional programs on standard certification tests. Dill also pointed out that minorities entering the teaching profession through alternative routes helped create a more demographically representative pool of teachers (Dill, 1996).

In response to the growth of school-based ACPs, California universities began to offer alternative programs. McKibben (1991) reported that by 1991, 21 California universities were sponsoring alternative internship programs. Teachers prepared through these university programs and through school-based programs were perceived to be as effective as those prepared through traditional teacher preparation programs. When beginning teachers were asked to rate what best prepared them to teach, working with mentor teachers and student

teaching were rated most highly. Areas with the lowest ratings were education methods courses and educational philosophy courses.

Allexsaht-Snider, Deegan, and White (1995) studied an ACP at the University of Georgia that was a school-university partnership. In the beginning of the program, student interns noted many discrepancies between course work they completed at the university and their experiences in the field, citing university courses as "repetitious and sometimes irrelevant and inconsistent with practices in the schools" (p. 524). As communication and collaboration developed in the program, the ACP interns viewed their program as "a good step for all of public education. Together, the student interns, university faculty, and teachers in classrooms can develop new techniques and methods to improve teaching" (p. 526). The researchers concluded that such alternative programs "could potentially assist educators in breaking with the traditional dualism that casts schools and universities in two separate worlds, with contradictory needs, abilities, interests, and demands" (p. 529). Similarly, the importance of a strong school-university partnership was highlighted in a recent study of Texas Centers for Professional Development and Technology, where researchers found that that an important factor in successful implementation was teamwork among university faculty, experienced teachers, and preservice teachers (Thomas and Kjelgaard, 1998).

The debate continued about the quality of ACPs compared to traditional programs. Wise and Darling-Hammond (1991) said that, although ACPs provide an option for people outside the 18 to 21-year-old age group, they provide substantially less preparation than university programs. They authors believe that ACPs were developed to circumvent state rules in order to solve long-term education problems such as teacher shortages, decrease in respect for colleges of education, and low teacher salaries. They concluded that other options bode better for the future of schools and should be pursued instead of alternative certification.

Haberman (1991a), by contrast, viewed ACPs as "the grass-roots response of the American people to an education dilemma" (p. 36) and reported that American colleges of education have not been preparing adequate teachers for urban and poor students. Teachers emerging from university-based programs are rarely interested in teaching in urban and poor school districts, opting instead for suburban and small town schools. Because ACPs tend to attract more minority teachers and to address the needs of urban students, Haberman embraced the alternative routes to certification. However, Zumwalt (1996) contended that although more alternatively certified teachers are likely initially to teach in urban schools, there is little evidence indicating that these same teachers are less likely to flee urban schools or are generally more responsive to the needs of urban students.

"Alternatives, yes. Lower standards, no."

Several observers have noted the irony that ACPs have taken root during the same time period that discussions were occurring about national standards for admission to teacher education programs and increased course rigor (Dill, 1996). In response to this, the AACTE issued a new policy statement in 1989 that described "what must constitute the core of alternative preparation programs for licensure" (Dill, 1996, p. 938). The policy statement encouraged states to outline a common set of standards, recommended by AACTE, that would

apply to all applicants. In addition to the policy statement, the AACTE composed 23 recommendations, entitled *Alternatives, Yes. Lower Standards, No!,* for an appropriate alternative certification program (Dill, 1996).

In 1990, the National Education Association (NEA) issued its recommendations for alternative certification programs. Keeping with the NEA goal of staffing all the nation's schools with qualified and licensed teachers, the NEA statement focused on maintaining high teacher standards while addressing the shortages in schools and on developing a diverse and demographically representative teaching pool. The NEA endorsed meeting these standards "through carefully structured non-traditional route programs ... that should be conducted in conjunction with a state-approved college or university teacher education program" (NEA, 1990, p. 2). NEA-approved guidelines for ACPs were included in the report.

In an address to the first annual conference of the National Alternative Certification Association in 1991, Haberman (1991b) outlined five standards of excellence for ACPs: (1) selection, (2) faculty, (3) content, (4) method, and (5) evaluation. None of the detailed requirements contradicted the minimum standards of the Association of Teacher Educators, but instead added a dimension of excellence and a voice of advocacy to the standards.

Identifying an alternative certification program

ACPs vary widely in purpose, content, and structure (Darling-Hammond, 1992). Variations across the nation have made it difficult for educators, policymakers, program directors, and researchers to evaluate the success of these programs. Because ACPs in different states—and even in different areas of the same state—were developed to meet varying needs, it has been difficult to select a common set of criteria to evaluate all the alternative routes to teaching (Dill, 1996).

In 1986 Roth and Lutz reviewed the research to help advise policymakers in this dilemma. They profiled several components programs should contain: eligibility requirements, pre-classroom preparation, continued training and supervision, evaluation, and certification. Their final conclusion was that "the term alternative certification means different things to different people, and that the variety of alternative route programs requires that each be evaluated on its own merits" (p. 20). This left educators still trying to decide whether to judge certification programs on outcomes such as student achievement or goals such as improving the quality or quantity of teachers (Dill, 1996).

After a review of many ACP studies, Darling-Hammond (1990)—an opponent of alternative certification—reiterated problems similar to those found by Roth and Lutz, citing the many widely varying definitions and standards for alternative programs across the nation as a major problem (as well as a similar lack of consistency in traditional teacher preparation programs). Darling-Hammond saw this as a detriment to establishing national goals for teacher education and stated that such a problem reduced opportunities for teachers to be mobile and teach in different states. Allowing school districts to certify teachers alternatively further exacerbated the problem of establishing national goals and standards.

In a 1994 issue of *The Educational Forum*, dedicated entirely to ACPs, Steffensen (1994) referred to alternative programs as just one of numerous "parochial" reforms—like choice, Teach for America, and home schooling—that acted as a "diversion" away from the critical issue of adequate federal support for education. Steffensen did not count alternative teacher certification as one of the few successful national reform efforts in America since the 1900s. In the same issue, Art Wise (1994), past president of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), characterized alternative teacher certification as a choice between professionalism and amateurism. Wise defined alternative certification as "a process in which the state licenses a person who has not completed a typical state-approved or equivalent program of studies designed to prepare individuals to teach" (p. 139). In the article, Wise advocated quality control of individuals entering the teaching profession and pointed out that many efforts to upgrade teacher standards had been undermined by ACPs.

Emily Feistritzer, current president of the National Center for Education Information in Washington, D.C., conducted a 1991 state-by-state analysis of ACPs. Her study was the first to clarify the different types of ACPs and identify states that had some kind of alternative program. Feistritzer broke the programs down into classes ranging from A through I, with Class A programs being "true" alternatives to Class I programs being those under consideration. Based on her classifications, Feistritzer reported that 39 states had some sort of alternative certification program by 1991, with 11 states having "true" alternative programs. "True" alternative programs were those defined as "programs designed specifically to bring high quality adults who already have at least a bachelor's degree—and many who have considerable life experience—into the teaching profession" (p. 12).

Many more studies were done in 1991 as ACPs continued to evolve. Zumwalt (1991) viewed ACPs as "a variety of context-specific naturally occurring experiments" (p. 83). She studied the Los Angeles, New Jersey, and Connecticut programs and compared them in four areas: (1) policy context, (2) parts of the preparation program such as admission criteria, role of higher education, and coursework, (3) school support, and (4) necessary steps to obtain certification. Like Feistritzer, Zumwalt noted significant differences in programs called "alternative" and cautioned people to judge each program separately on the basis of its goals and objectives, as well as its impact on students and the teaching profession. She questioned whether some ACPs were undermining equity and professionalism in the teaching profession. Zumwalt recommended that alternative programs be viewed as experiments in design and implementation rather than as competition for traditional programs.

Comparisons between traditional and alternative programs

As greater numbers of states enacted legislation to add ACPs to their teacher preparation programs, research turned toward defining and evaluating the various programs and comparing alternatively certified teachers with traditionally certified teachers. McKibben (1988) reported that a statewide analysis of California's programs found no statistically significant differences on five of six criteria among three groups of beginning teachers: ACP interns, probationary teachers, and emergency permit teachers. Cognitive activity was the only criterion where ACP interns scored lower than the other two groups. ACP interns showed an 80 percent retention rate, compared to a 40 percent rate for the other groups. These

findings led legislators to conclude that California's alternative certification program was as successful as traditional programs.

Similar findings were reported from a Texas study of a university-based alternative program by Brown, Edington, Spencer, and Tinafero (1989). These researchers found grade point averages (GPA) for ACP interns to be highest (3.04) of the three groups studied. Traditionally prepared teachers showed an average GPA of 2.79, while emergency permit teachers had an average GPA of 2.41. However, there were no significant differences found for GPAs in teaching fields. The researchers concluded, "The findings suggest that the academic and classroom performance of the three groups of teachers involved in the study were similar ... It would appear that this type of teacher training provides a viable option for fulfilling the serious teacher shortages which exist in this area" (p. 23).

Houston Independent School District (HISD) provided the first alternative certification program in Texas. Its initial year report (1985-86) stated that (1) principals and administrators believed ACP interns' abilities were the same as those of first-year traditionally certified teachers, (2) most ACP interns planned to return to teaching in HISD the following year, and (3) student achievement scores and teacher appraisal scores revealed no significant differences at the secondary level. Slight differences were observed at the elementary level where scores favored experienced teachers (Stafford and Barrow, 1994).

Subsequent annual HISD alternative program studies continued to verify that the ACP is a "viable alternative to college and university teacher training programs" (Stafford and Barrow, 1994, p. 197). HISD's research studies since 1990 have shown that ACP-prepared teachers remain in teaching longer than traditionally trained teachers and that a higher percentage of ACP interns passed the state-mandated teacher exam than university-trained teachers. Moreover, the HISD studies revealed that students of ACP–prepared teachers scored higher on standardized tests than their counterparts in traditionally trained teachers' classrooms. These findings led HISD to conclude that the "district's ACP has achieved its primary goal of providing a teacher certification alternative that is at least as effective as traditional university teacher preparation programs" (Stafford and Barrow, 1994, p. 197).

Like HISD, Dallas Independent School District (DISD) developed its own alternative certification program in 1986-87. Hutton (1987) conducted an evaluation of the program and concluded that, although the DISD program did not have a great impact on the teacher shortage in DISD, the program had produced many qualified teachers and helped alleviate some of the shortages. Hutton attributed ACP interns' good performance to several factors: appropriate screening; sufficient participation of advisors, principals, and supervising teachers; early assignment of the intern as the teacher of record; and the help of good mentor teachers.

The district-based Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) ACP resembles the State of New Jersey program. Both provide qualified candidates only a short period of full-time, preservice training before assigning them to full-time teaching positions (Stoddart, 1992). The LAUSD study conducted by Shulman (1989) found that merely assigning any mentor to an ACP intern was not sufficient support for that intern; the intern and mentor

needed to be matched according to subject area and grade level. Shulman further suggested that it was not wise to assign any new teacher to classrooms with histories of problems.

Stoddart (1990) also studied the LAUSD program and reported several findings: (1) ACP interns were comparable to university trained teachers in subject-matter knowledge; (2) after three years, attrition rates of interns were comparable to national rates; (3) LAUSD interns were older than traditionally trained teachers; (4) more minorities and more males participated in the alternative programs; (5) the ACP was not as academically rigorous as a traditional university program; and (6) multicultural education was lengthier for LAUSD interns. Stoddart found it difficult to compare ACPs and traditional teacher preparation programs because they are so different. The final conclusion from the study was that institutions of higher education and school districts need to find better ways to work together to train future teachers.

The 1990 Darling-Hammond study also addressed the quality of teachers certified through alternative routes. Darling-Hammond found the knowledge of ACP interns to be inconsistent, the job satisfaction of interns to be lower, and the possibility that inadequate preparation led to early attrition. She concluded that these problems might be alleviated with adequate preservice preparation coupled with intensive on-the-job supervision. The research studies Darling-Hammond reviewed identified several more issues: (1) subject matter is important "up to a point" (p. 133); (2) relationships between education coursework and teacher performance were stronger than relationships between subject-matter coursework and teacher effectiveness; and (3) high-quality, clinical learning experiences supervised by a mentor are invaluable. From these studies, Darling-Hammond concluded that "policies providing alternate routes to teacher certification may be evaluated in terms of the extent to which they incorporate opportunities to acquire these different elements of teaching knowledge" (p. 136).

In the early 1980s, the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) was instrumental in promoting ACPs to address teacher shortages in math and science and to improve the quality of the teaching force in all 15 states under its jurisdiction (Dill, 1996). In 1990, Cornett studied policies in the SREB states to ascertain the similarities and differences between traditional and ACP teachers, finding that: (1) the number of teachers being prepared through ACPs continues to increase; (2) individuals who would not otherwise enter the field of teaching were attracted to these programs; (3) even without conclusive evidence, it appears that alternatively certified teachers are as effective as those traditionally certified; and (4) due to state mandates, institutions of higher education were beginning to collaborate with state and local school systems.

Marchant (1990) found that, although a major strength of ACP teachers was their knowledge of the subject matter, the lack of such knowledge is not what principals and beginning teachers cite as a major problem in classroom teaching. More pressing problems are classroom management and organizational skills. Marchant believed that widespread lack of prior training and experience in classroom settings among ACP candidates constituted a weakness in the program, citing a "possible lack of emphasis on pedagogical knowledge and development of reflective processes" (p. 9). Marchant reported that when alternative

certification interns were compared to traditionally trained student teachers and graduate interns, the alternative interns were rated the lowest of the groups on communication skills, instructional skills, interpersonal skills, and ability to establish a positive learning environment.

A study of the New Jersey program done by Natriello and Zumwalt (1992) found that alternatively certified teachers were equal to traditionally trained teachers in measures used to indicate talent. The authors also found that, although traditional students were more likely to major in the subject they were teaching, they did not receive higher scores on the national teacher exam; instead, ACP teachers outscored traditional route teachers across the board. Further findings indicated that ACP teachers were more likely to teach in urban and low socio-economic areas than were traditionally trained teachers. Natriello and Zumwalt also looked at differences between teachers of different subjects and found that ACP English teachers were more satisfied with their jobs and more likely to stay in teaching than were ACP math teachers.

When Guyton, Fox, and Sisk (1991) compared teaching attitudes, teacher efficacy, and teacher performance of first year teachers prepared by alternative and traditional teacher education programs, they concluded that the teachers were similar on almost all measures. ACP teachers were more positive about the value of their teacher education program after the first month of teaching; however, traditionally trained teachers were more positive about teaching at the end of the year and about staying in the profession. During the year of the study, six of 23 alternatively trained teachers dropped out of the program. There was no significant difference in the teaching performance of the two groups of teachers, as perceived either by evaluators or the teachers themselves.

Dill (1994), reporting on Texas ACPs, found them to be dramatically different from most other teacher education programs and suggested that Texas programs be seen as catalysts for innovation. These programs were developed collaboratively among regional education service agencies, school districts, and universities. Dill reported that the programs used rigorous applicant screening processes that yielded individuals who had high ideals and were problem solvers and lifelong learners, and noted that these individuals were personally and demographically different from traditionally trained teachers. She suggested that the Texas program could be used as a model for other teacher certification programs to enhance minority recruitment and facilitate a smooth transition into the teaching profession of mid-career switchers.

Edelfelt (1994) summarized what had been achieved by the formation of ACPs in many states. He verified that there were apparent gains in numbers of minority teachers, that ACPs relieved some teacher shortages, that the presence of alternatively certified interns appeared to better meet the needs of minority and urban students, and that the need for access to traditional teacher education programs by older individuals had been addressed. Edelfelt concluded that challenges to traditional teacher preparation programs created by ACPs indicated "true innovation and progress" (p. 223).

Who is attracted to alternative certification programs?

Stoddart (1993) looked at the different types of people who were attracted to ACPs versus traditional programs. Stoddart, as well as Dial and Stevens (1993), found that ACPs attracted more minorities and those individuals willing to teach in urban schools. The interns in Stoddart's study also held higher expectations—both for poor and advantaged students—than did their traditionally trained counterparts. Stoddart also noted that ACP interns with life experiences similar to their students treated all students more fairly and tended not to categorize students' abilities on the basis of race or wealth.

When Natriello and Zumwalt (1993) compared the types of places ACP interns and university prepared teachers had lived, they found ACP teachers more likely to have lived in urban areas than university prepared teachers. This finding helped explain why more alternate route teachers were willing to teach in urban areas and to teach disadvantaged students.

Like many other researchers, Natriello and Zumwalt (1993) found that members of minority groups were more likely to pursue teaching through ACPs than through traditional programs. Likewise, Wale and Irons (1988) concluded that Texas ACPs attracted a more mature population and more minority candidates than traditional programs. Haberman (1990) has long argued for recruiting a greater number of mature individuals into the teaching profession, asserting that college-age students still in the stages of late adolescence and early adulthood are not developmentally mature enough to teach in difficult situations. He cites the fact that students in urban (and even suburban) school districts place very high demands on the teacher responsible for their learning. Research has shown that successful teachers are those with a strong sense of personal identity, good support systems, and unusually high commitment to the job of teaching (Haberman, 1990).

Even with the influx of more minority teachers through ACPs, Feistritzer's (1990a) report entitled *Profile of Teachers in the U.S.—1990* revealed that the teaching pool was becoming "older, whiter, and more female" (p. 3). Feistritzer found that alternative routes attracted more minorities than did traditional routes, and the minority teachers were more likely to believe that it was important for minority students to be taught by members of their same racial or ethnic group. Other areas of Feistritzer's report showed that ACP interns were more in agreement that "pay based on performance, market-driven pay, career ladders, and a national entrance examination for teachers would improve the teaching profession" (p. 4). Moreover, Feistritzer found that a greater percentage of alternatively certified than traditionally trained teachers were willing to teach in urban schools.

Hawk (1997) reported that, according to an NEA report in 1995, the minority teaching pool is projected to shrink to five percent by the year 2000, although the minority population will increase to one third of school-age students nationally. Reporting on North Carolina's Project ACT (Alternative Certification for Teachers), Hawk noted that more than one-third of the individuals in the program were African American—three times as many as found in traditional programs. Hawk concluded that alternative routes to teaching attract more minority candidates than traditional programs, both nationally and in North Carolina. On the other hand, a Michigan study by Shen concluded that ACPs do not attract that many more minority

candidates. Shen found that teachers who gained certification the traditional way were 87 percent white, whereas those who gained certification via ACP were 79 percent white ("Teacher Quality: New Teachers, " 1997).

A Texas study by Barnes, Salmon, and Wale (1990) revealed that more minority candidates were certified through ACPs than through traditional programs. They also found that ACP candidates were highly motivated and enthusiastic, and that a greater number of them passed teacher exams than did traditionally trained teachers. Principals and mentor teachers felt that the interns were unique, and their performance by the end of the year quelled doubts that may have existed about the ACP. Moreover, the study showed that student achievement under ACP teachers was comparable to statewide student achievement under first-year teachers trained traditionally. Studies conducted of the Dallas, El Paso, and Houston districts' ACPs revealed similar findings regarding student achievement (Feistritzer, 1990b).

In 1992, Feistritzer conducted a research study on gender and ethnicity of individuals seeking alternative certification. She compared the 40,000 people certified to teach through ACPs by that year with a 1990 study of the current teacher work force and teacher education majors in traditional programs, she found that in ACPs, 54 percent of applicants were male and 17 percent were minorities, whereas 29 percent of teachers overall were male and 9 percent, minority. A large number (41 percent) of applicants were currently teaching or had previously taught. They were more reform-minded than the current pool of teachers, favoring national standards, a national curriculum, and national tests. More than two-thirds (69 percent) of applicants cited the high value or significance of education in society as their reason for wanting to be teachers, compared to fewer than a third (32 percent) of the school work force.

Military retirees were mentioned repeatedly as an untapped pool of future candidates available for alternative certification. In a speech at the Annual Meeting of the Mid-South Educational Research Association, McCree (1993) stated that post-career military personnel need to be studied more closely as potential ACP candidates due to their skills in personnel management, resource allocation, high level technologies, and counseling and training. Other reasons McCree gave for considering retired military personnel as potential teachers included (1) their general philosophy of learning, i.e., everyone can learn, (2) proven work record, (3) documented ability to function under adverse conditions, (4) years of direct and indirect teaching experience, (5) meaningful exposure to multi-culturalism, (6) strong sense of dedication to community, (7) pride and self confidence, and (8) strong desire to excel.

Alternative certification for bilingual and special education teachers

Bilingual education has become an area of growing teacher shortages, especially in California and Texas. Although there are enough certified teachers to meet the needs of California school districts, the certification areas of available teachers do not match the areas in demand (McKibbon and Ray, 1994). The LAUSD district-based alternative program has helped to alleviate this problem. Stoddart (1990) studied the LAUSD program and found that alternative certification has been an improvement over the use of emergency and misassigned teachers who were negatively impacting students most in need of quality instruction. Stoddart

reported that as many as 25 percent of new teachers hired for elementary bilingual classrooms were certified through the LAUSD alternative program.

Special education is another area that has benefited in recent years from ACPs. Rosenberg and Rock (1994) studied a unique program at Johns Hopkins University that was developed in collaboration with two urban local education agencies and the Maryland State Department of Education. The program was a field-based, two-year experimental program leading to certification and a Master's degree in special education. They found that (1) ACP teachers were performing at—or exceeding—satisfactory levels in their first year of teaching, (2) ACP teachers demonstrated specific instructional and management competencies at better than satisfactory levels, and (3) ACP teachers performed on a level comparable to traditionally trained teachers.

However, few studies verify the efficacy of ACPs in the area of special education (Buck, Polloway, and Robb, 1995). Banks and Necco (1987) found a higher attrition rate for special education teachers trained in ACPs and inferred a relationship between certification type and job longevity. In a New Mexico study on attrition, Smith (1994) contended that alternatively trained special education teachers had an attrition rate three times higher than their traditionally trained peers.

Buck, Polloway, and Robb (1995) conducted a national survey to ascertain how different states were using ACPs to train teachers of students with disabilities. They found that the majority of states (62 percent) partially rely on ACPs for teachers in early childhood, middle, secondary, and special education, with 24 states reporting some type of ACP for special education. The authors projected that by 2000 approximately 85 percent of U. S. states would provide alternative routes to teacher certification.

Evaluations of alternative certification programs

The need for more comprehensive evaluations of alternative teacher certification programs was a common theme in the literature. Otuya (1992) questioned the depth of alternatively certified teachers' knowledge base and found that although ACPs add much-needed diversity to the teaching force, the evaluative data are still inconclusive regarding the overall effects on students.

In a national survey of ACPs, Buck, Polloway, and Robb (1995) reported that 87 percent of states with ACPs were involved in ongoing evaluation. However, most state-level ACP directors offered no judgments about the effectiveness of alternative programs when compared with traditional programs. This fact led the authors to question whether the need to fill classrooms with teachers overrides less immediate concerns regarding teacher quality.

Conclusion

In testimony before the House Committee on Education and the Workforce, Feistritzer (1998b) reported that by 1997, 41 states, plus the District of Columbia, had some type of alternative teacher certification program. More than 75,000 teachers have been prepared

through state-run alternative programs, with thousands more being trained through ESA and university alternative teacher preparation programs. Although these ACPs were a response to teacher shortages and concern about the quality of the teaching force, the programs' purposes have expanded to meet additional diverse and varied educational needs.

ACPs are attracting highly qualified, well educated, talented, enthusiastic, and life-experienced adults to the teaching profession (Feistritzer, 1998b). However, critics argue that the recruitment, preparation, and retention of teachers is much more complex than originally thought by policymakers, and contend that "alternative certification has not proven to be the panacea nor the disaster some predicted" (Zumwalt, 1996, p. 41). Stoddart and Floden (1995) stated that current alternative routes to teaching are not "well positioned to prepare teachers for the 'break-the-mold' schools some policy makers are currently seeking to create" (p. 14). Most researchers agree that one major difficulty in drawing a conclusive policy statement about ACPs is the great variety of state and local alternative certification programs (Zumwalt, 1996).

The consensus among most researchers is that both traditional and alternative routes to teacher preparation need improvement. Although current alternative routes may not significantly improve teacher learning, they are deemed to be no worse than many university-based teacher preparation programs (Stoddart and Floden, 1995). The concept of alternative teacher certification suggests "a variety of strategies for developing content and pedagogical skills in novice teachers" (Dill, 1996, p. 957).

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